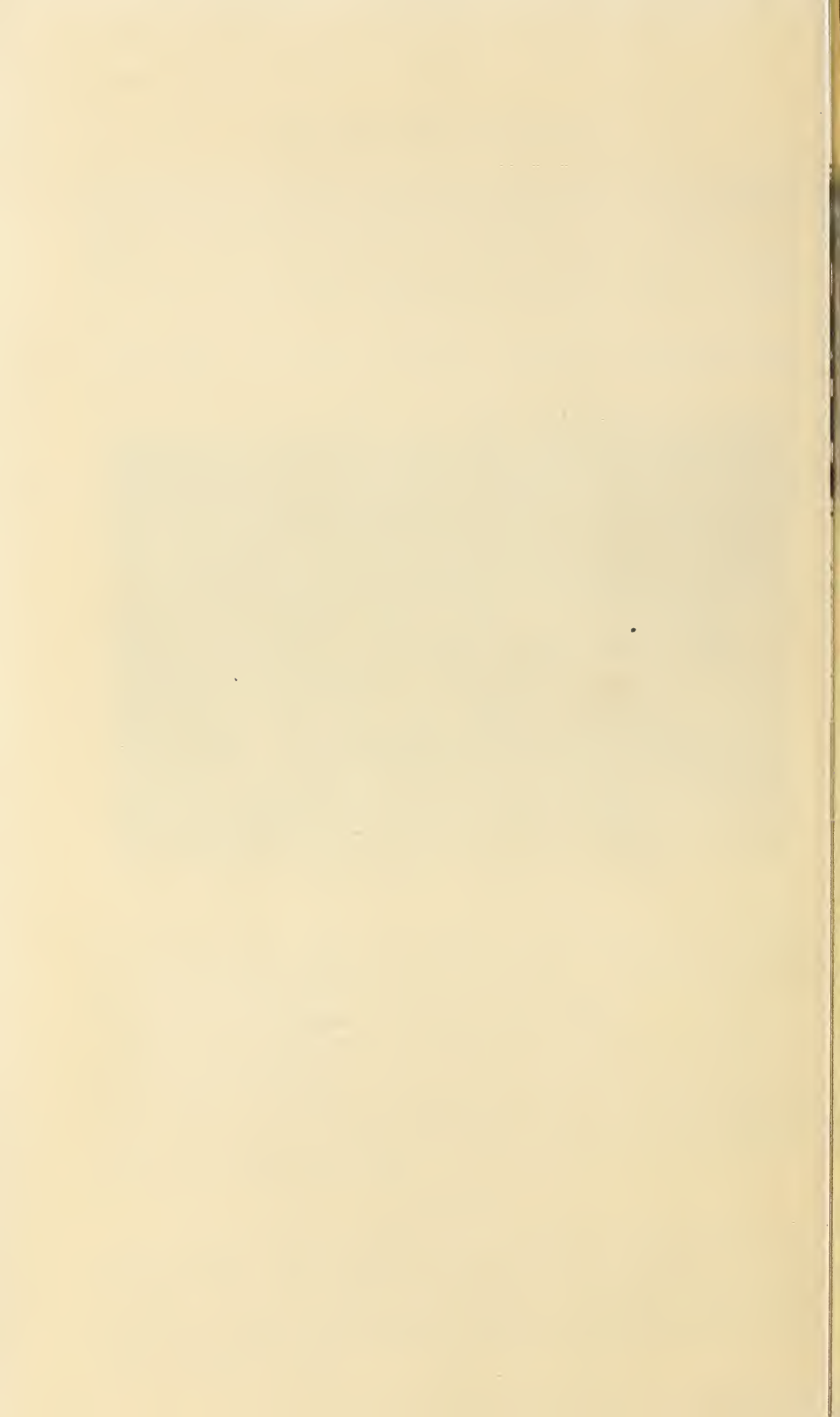


Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



BU
Bulley 1114

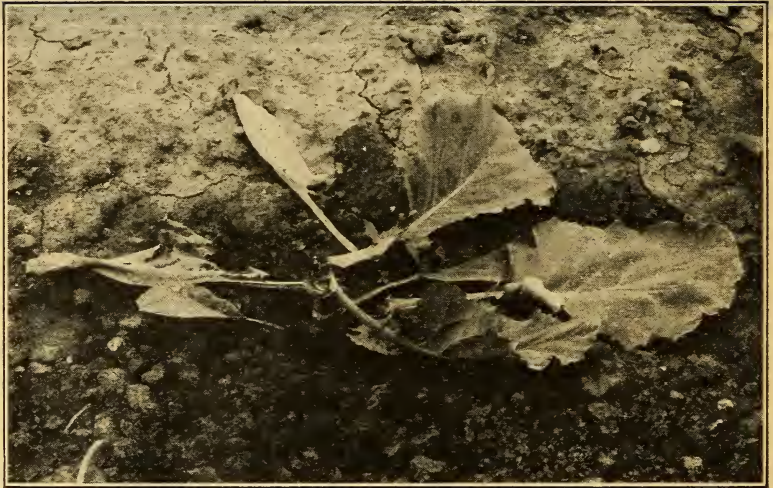
Cutworms in *the* Garden



Rev.ed.
follows

Issued March, 1927

U.S. Department
of Agriculture
Washington, D.C.
LEAFLET NO. 2



Cabbage plant destroyed by cutworms

CUTWORMS IN THE GARDEN

By W. H. WHITE, *Associate Entomologist, Truck-Crop Insect Investigations, Bureau of Entomology*

When you find such plants as seedling tomatoes, cabbage, lettuce, and melons cut off near the ground, especially in the spring and early summer, it is fairly certain that a cutworm is responsible for the damage.

The Culprit

A cutworm is the young or caterpillar of a night-flying moth. The moth lays its eggs upon plants or other objects and in some cases directly upon the ground, and the eggs hatch into cutworms. There are many kinds of these worms. The commoner ones are stout, soft-bodied, smooth or nearly smooth, and cylindrical, varying in color from gray to brown or nearly black and sometimes spotted or marked with stripes.

Where and How Cutworms Live

Many kinds of cutworms go through the winter in the soil and begin work again early in the spring. Vegetable crops are not the only ones attacked, for a wide variety of ornamental plants and field crops may be severely damaged. Cutworms ordinarily work at night but often feed on dark, cloudy days. When you have come across injury you can often find the guilty worm in a small burrow in the soil close by the plant which it has destroyed.

How to Combat Cutworms

It is easy to get rid of cutworms by using a poisoned-bran bait.

The Bait

Dry bran.....	1 peck or 5 pounds.
White arsenic or Paris green.....	¼ pound.
Sirup or molasses.....	1 pint.
Water.....	3 or 4 quarts.

Or, in large quantities:

Dry bran.....	25 pounds.
White arsenic or Paris green.....	1 pound.
Sirup or molasses.....	2 quarts.
Water.....	15 to 20 quarts.

How to Mix the Bait

(1) Thoroughly mix the poison with the bran. This is important. Each particle of bran must carry a little poison to get a good kill. When making small quantities, you can mix the bait in a bucket

with a paddle, adding the poison slowly and stirring the bran at the same time. A still more effective way is to mix the poison and bran with the hands, but since soluble arsenic is absorbed to a slight extent through the skin, there may be some objection to this method. If the hands have any cuts, scratches, or other wounds, do not put them into the bait. When making large quantities you can mix the poison with the bran on some flat, smooth surface, using a shovel and rake in much the same way as they do in mixing concrete.

(2) Mix the sirup with the water.

(3) Add the water and sirup solution to the mixture of bran and poison, stirring slowly all the time. Large quantities of water added at one time will wash the poison from the bran, resulting in an uneven mixture.

Caution.—Add only enough liquid to make a crumbly mass. It is a good plan to set aside a little of the mixture of dry bran and arsenic so that if too much water has been used, this dry reserve can be added to bring the mixture up to the proper consistency. Large quantities can be made up in galvanized iron or wooden washtubs, and small quantities in buckets or similar containers.

How and When to Use the Bait

Either broadcast the poisoned bait or sow it by hand along the rows or about the base of the plant. Do this late in the evening so that the bait will not dry out to any great extent before the worms get busy. Since cutworms overwinter in the ground, it is a good plan to broadcast the poisoned bait over the cultivated areas a few days before the crop comes up or is set in the field. Where plants are to be transplanted to the field, this method is particularly valuable. If hills are made up for melons or tomatoes, apply the bait directly to the hills a few days before the crop is set in the field. Applications of this kind will rid the field of many of the worms before the crop is subject to attack.

Quantity of Bait to Use

Ten to fifteen pounds of the wet bait is enough for one application per acre. Where the bait is applied directly to the rows or hills, a smaller quantity will be sufficient. It may require two or three applications at two-day intervals to rid the field of the pest.

Where to Obtain the Arsenical Poisons

White arsenic can usually be purchased at drug stores. Paris green is a common insecticide and is usually handled by seedsmen and dealers in farm supplies or insecticides.

Warning.—You must remember that a stomach poison for an insect is also poisonous to other animals and man. Keep the poison and poisoned-bran bait away from farm animals and irresponsible persons.

N0016a